

Lesson Plan: Interconnections Between Private and Civic Life – Focus on the County

This lesson is designed for students to examine the connections that exist between their lives and the government by examining the various roles governments play in establishing rules and regulation throughout society. This lesson's scenarios focus on the roles played by County government. It would serve as an excellent lesson to follow the mandatory Student Rights and Responsibilities assembly that each student attends at the beginning of the school year. Additionally, it serves as a good introduction to why we have government and its role in the lives of citizens.

Connection to POS: Standards 8.1 and 8.2

- ◆ *Students will analyze fundamental liberties, rights, and values.....(8.1.1.c)*
- ◆ *Students will apply constitutional protections to everyday situations. (8.1.1.d)*
- ◆ *Students will explain the responsibilities of a citizen in the family, school, community, state, nation, and the world. (8.1.2.a)*

SOL Standards: 7.1., 7.2., 7.9



Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- ◆ describe the distinction between civic life and private life and recognize their interconnections.
- ◆ evaluate the responsibility of the County government to provide for the health, safety, welfare, comfort, and convenience of its inhabitants.
- ◆ identify concurrent and reserved governmental powers.



Materials

- ◆ chalkboard or overhead
- ◆ copies of Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook
www.fcps.k12.va.us/DSSSE/student services/SRNR/stsvsrnr.htm



Time Needed

- ◆ 15 to 30 minutes for initial activity
- ◆ additional time as necessary to build on SR&R information



Procedures

1. Begin by explaining to students that you are going to tell them a story of a typical day in the life of a Fairfax County citizen. You can describe the day as a “real” day or a hypothetical one. A sample story is included on the next page to help you develop your own. Before you begin, ask your students to note each occurrence during the story when the government, at any level (federal, state, county,) had some connection to or impact on the story.
2. After you have read the story, ask the class to cite examples of when they noted governmental involvement in the story. Have a class recorder write these responses on the board or the overhead, differentiating the various levels of government involved if possible (local, state, federal.) Have students evaluate which of these activities directly influences them. Count the number of activities that they feel impact them and decide whether they think the number is reasonable or higher than they would have guessed.
3. Lead a discussion on the degree to which government is involved in a person’s life. Also, have the students consider which level of government is playing the most active role in their own life. Many believe the federal government has the greatest impact on them, but over the course of this lesson, they will begin to see that the local/county government touches them to a much greater degree. This activity is a good launching point for discussing concepts such as *federalism, citizen involvement and responsibilities*, and other similar topics.



Assessment

- ◆ In a short essay or journal entry, have students write their own “day in the life of” stories. After completing the stories, they should re-read them, noting and describing the role that county government plays in their life by highlighting or keeping a separate list of such incidents. Ask them to reflect on whether private life and civic life are ever really separate.
- ◆ Organize a debate (to coincide with the SR&R assembly if possible) to discuss the issue of limitation of an individual’s rights in the interest of a larger group (for example, locker sweeps at school.) Be sure that students prepare remarks before starting the debate and that a sufficient number will be able to argue both in favor of limiting individual rights for the “greater good” as well as against any limitation of our constitutional rights.



Extensions

- ◆ After attending the S, R, & R assembly, conduct this lesson or refer back to it. Lead students in a discussion of individual rights, group safety, and how the two meet but cannot conflict in our schools. Ask students in what situations they feel temporary or minor suspension of Constitutional rights is justified and in which situations it is not.



Differentiations

- ◆ Students could “act out” day in the life stories and then have their classmates identify areas where the government’s responsibilities touched them. They would then be required to point out those same examples during other student’s role plays.



Interdisciplinary Connections

- ◆ This activity could also be used in conjunction with a novel unit where students are reading books about community, governance, and individual rights. Examples might include *Nothing but the Truth*, *Lord of the Flies*, and others.

Sample Story: A Day in the Life of a Fairfax County Citizen

My Saturday was a hectic one. I got up early because I knew I had a lot to do, and took a shower. Breakfast was sausage, eggs, and coffee, and before long I was on my way. I noted before I left the house that Channel 16 announced an ozone alert. I would have to try and stay inside as much as I could.

My quick start was frustrated because I immediately ran into a monster traffic jam on Route 123. All the people in these new housing developments are really clogging the streets. To make matters worse, I tried to scoot through a stoplight a little too late and got a ticket for running a red light. What a morning, and I'd only just started!

My first errand was to drop off an overdue book at the library, and then I was on to the farmers' market by the K-Mart in Burke. The ozone didn't seem too bad, so I played a quick nine holes of golf at Burke Lake Park and by then, it was lunchtime. One of my students served me a couple gorditas at the Taco Bell.

Later that afternoon, I decided it was time to stop my daughter's whining and go pick up the cat she wanted to adopt from the shelter. She was one happy kid when she got home from her swimming lesson.

It rained in the late afternoon and then got much cooler. Perfect for the concert at Lake Accotink, and the end of a full day.

Government Contact Points (You can probably add others!)

-- shower	(Clean Water Act, Fairfax County Water Authority)
-- sausage, eggs, coffee	(FDA, tariffs on imports)
-- Channel 16 ozone alert	(National Weather Service, County-run cable channel, County Health Department)
-- Route 123	(VDOT, County Department of Transportation)
-- new housing developments	(County planning and zoning issues, State highways)
-- ticket	(County police force, state and local traffic laws)
-- library	(Fairfax County has 19 libraries—the most of any County in the state)
-- farmers' market	(Fairfax County has 9 seasonal farmers' markets)
-- Burke Lake Park	(Fairfax County has more than 350 parks)
-- Taco Bell	(federal minimum wage, FDA, County health inspections)
-- animal shelter	(run by the County)
-- swimming lesson	(Fairfax County runs a variety of summer camps and programs)
-- concert	(offered during the summer at several County locations)